**DOCUMENT RESUME**

ED 148 409 JC 780 026

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TITLE Staff Development for Adjunct Faculty.
PUB DATE [77]
NOTE 15p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS College Faculty; Community Colleges; Educational Needs; Inservice Programs; *Inservice Teacher Education; *Junior Colleges; Models; *Part Time Teachers; *Program Design; *Staff Improvement; Teacher Orientation

ABSTRACT

The orientation and in-service training of adjunct faculty members is one of the most neglected aspects of an institution's faculty development program. Few institutions provide any consideration at all and, of those which do, most conduct little more than brief orientation sessions at the beginning of an academic term. There can be little doubt that this lack of concern and effort constitutes an educationally unhealthy situation. An effective training and development program for adjunct instructors must include a number and variety of elements. Some will incorporate opportunities in which the entire adjunct faculty can participate, while others will necessitate small group or even individual sessions. There should be seminars and workshops which feature the expertise and talents of local and institutional representatives. The common thread which must prevail throughout the entire effort is that the adjunct faculty members must be afforded opportunities to grow professionally and become an active, integral part of the planning and implementation of the institution's instructional program. A maximum of coordination and cooperation between adjunct and full-time faculty must be incorporated and channels of communication between all instructors, their respective supervisors, and the institution, must be open and effective. (Author)

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# STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR ADJUNCT FACULTY

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## STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR ADJUNCT FACULTY

The utilization of adjunct faculty members by institutions involved in post-secondary education has increased greatly in recent years, especially in institutions heavily oriented toward occupational-technical programs. With the rapid advancement of the community college movement during the past decade and the great increases in the numbers of adult students, there has been a corresponding need for more instructors. Often, this need can be satisfied only through the use of adjunct instructors.

The individuals who serve as adjunct faculty members teach a wide variety of courses and represent various segments of the population. Some are teachers at other educational institutions, some are practitioners in business and industry, while others are housewives, retired persons, etc. Therein lie some of the challenges and causes of concern.

One of the most often stated criticisms of the utilization of part-time instructors is that as outstanding as such individuals may be in their own fields, they are not trained teachers. This is generally true. Most adjunct instructors are contracted for their professional competencies, not their pedagogical training. This makes it incumbent upon an institution to provide adequate orientation, in-service, and faculty development opportunities for them.

**Needs**

The need for such opportunities are numerous:

1. Instructors without pedagogical training need to be aware of and develop the techniques and methodologies of effective teaching.

   Many adjunct instructors are contracted because they possess specific skills and competencies and are recruited directly from business and industry. Generally, they have not taught previously and their degrees, if they hold them, are in majors other than education. Few have taken any education courses. It is imperative that such individuals receive exposure to and instruction in the techniques and methods considered to be conducive to effective teaching.

2. Instructors whose formal pedagogical training is in the areas of elementary and secondary education need to be aware of the particular learning characteristics and needs of adult students.

   Adult students possess unique learning characteristics and have different needs and concerns than do young children, adolescents, or teenagers. Educators trained to teach in elementary and secondary schools need to learn the techniques and methods of relating effectively to adult students. Those who teach evening classes need to be cognizant of the special problems experienced by students who attend classes after completing a full day's work.

3. All instructors, regardless of professional preparation and background need to be continually introduced to the latest educational innovations and developments.

Education is an ever-changing profession with innovations constantly being introduced to meet new needs and objectives. Every instructor needs to be involved in on-going training and development programs which assure the maintenance of recency and the acquisition of new skills and knowledge.

4. Instructors not familiar with the Community College movement need to be introduced to the philosophy and development of the two-year institutions.

   Community colleges differ considerably from public schools and four-year colleges and universities. It is important that those who teach in community colleges understand the differences and be aware and supportive of the philosophies of "open door admissions," "community-based instruction," "expanding educational opportunities," "new students," and a strong commitment to occupational-technical programs.

5. Instructors need to be knowledgeable about the college's missions, goals, programs, and procedures.

   In many instances an adjunct faculty member is a student's only contact with the college. It is important, therefore, for the adjunct instructor to have a thorough knowledge of the institution. Such knowledge is necessary before the instructor can be an effective, viable, and integral part of the institution's instructional staff.

6. Instructors must have an awareness of and the ability to meet the particular educational needs of all students enrolled in the institution.

Community colleges have provided extended educational opportunities to students who have previously been denied or were otherwise unable to pursue post-secondary instruction and training. As the number of such students rises, it is of vital importance that faculty members become increasingly aware of their unique learning patterns and educational needs. If the "open door" is not to become a "revolving door," instructors, part-time and full-time, must possess the talents and skills necessary to successfully respond to and provide for the needs of minority and culturally disadvantaged students.

Clearly, the need for a meaningful training program for adjunct faculty is acute.

Goals

The several basic goals of an adjunct faculty training program could include:

1. Develop among adjunct faculty members a knowledge and appreciation of the history, philosophy, and goals of the community college movement in general, and the contracting institution in particular.
2. Enable adjunct faculty members to comprehend the variability of students' intellectual characteristics, background, and certain non-intellectual factors that, as research of community college students indicates, can either enhance or negate their performance.
3. Improve the institution's educational program by providing adjunct faculty members with instruction on the preparation and use of audio-visual materials and devices, instructional

methodology, planning and organizing instruction, preparation of instructional objectives and course outlines, and the evaluation of students and instruction.

4. Design or acquire a valid and reliable instrument with which to evaluate the performance and effectiveness of the instructional methods and techniques of adjunct faculty members.
5. Design or acquire a survey instrument which will accurately obtain and facilitate an assessment of the training needs of adjunct faculty members.
6. Describe and demonstrate to the adjunct faculty members the full range of their responsibilities and provide them with an understanding of the services and assistance they can expect from the college.

Limitations

In light of the large numbers of adjunct instructors being utilized throughout the United States, there appears to be surprisingly few attempts to provide training for them. A rather extensive research effort has failed to discover a single in depth, on-going, in-service training program for adjunct faculty members. The most ambitious programs consist of little more than a brief orientation session at the beginning of the academic term and, perhaps, a handbook.

The reasons for this are understandable when the unique challenges which are inherent in the utilization of adjunct faculty members are considered.

One involves the fact that adjunct faculty members are often unavailable or inaccessible to the institution and its students. Most adjunct instructors are primarily employed with organizations or

institutions other than the college. Their initial and major commitment, obligations of time and effort, and even loyalty, are directed to that source. This situation creates both communications and logistic difficulties which any realistic adjunct faculty training program must recognize and consider.

Another element which must be given serious consideration is the fact that much of the adjunct faculty staff changes from academic term to academic term. Many classes are scheduled only occasionally or only if there is sufficient student interest. This faculty mobility makes it difficult, often impossible, to provide all instructors with all of the training they may need and somewhat diminishes the value of establishing a single year-long program.

Such factors would behoove an institution to plan several individual programs - programs which will be of benefit to those who are available to attend only one session, as well as those who will participate in all sessions. The assumption is that the greatest need for training rests with newly contracted instructors. It would appear, therefore, to be of best advantage to repeat the sessions each year rather than to develop new programs annually. Another effective strategy might be to plan an alternative delivery system which would include the development of self-instructional materials. Such materials could consist of programmed texts, workbooks, and audio/visual (slide/tape and video tape) modules which would permit adjunct instructors to engage in the training program at times convenient to them. In any event, the only viable adjunct training program will be the one which realizes that limitations of time and opportunity exist.

Elements

An effective training and development program for adjunct instructors must include a number and variety of elements. Some will incorporate opportunities in which the entire adjunct faculty can participate, while others will necessitate small group or even individual sessions. There should be seminars and workshops which feature the expertise and talents of local and institutional representatives. The common thread which must prevail throughout the entire effort is that the adjunct faculty members must be afforded opportunities to grow professionally and become an active, integral part of the planning and implementation of the institution's instructional program. A maximum of coordination and cooperation between adjunct and full-time faculty must be incorporated and channels of communication between all instructors, their respective supervisors, and the institution, must be open and effective.

During the conduct of the adjunct faculty training program, a number of elements should be considered. Several could be implemented within a relatively short time-frame utilizing the institution's existing structure, personnel, and resources. Included would be:

1. Orientation should begin during the job interview with a prospective instructor.

   In far too many instances, the only orientation an adjunct instructor receives is the title and a brief description of the course, the location of the classroom, the name of the textbook, and, if he or she is fortunate, a copy of the course syllabus. Properly conducted, the interview could serve to relate the philosophies of the institution, describe the nature of the student constituency, explain the mission,

goals, and objectives of the instructional program, and introduce certain rules, regulations, and procedures. The session could and should be an important orientation tool.

2. An institution-wide Adjunct Faculty Training Committee should be established.

   A standing committee should be established to review, plan, establish, implement, evaluate, and revise orientation and training opportunities for adjunct faculty members. The committee should constitute an on-going function and should form sub-committees to develop and implement the various elements of the total adjunct faculy training program.

3. Adjunct faculty members should be included in all institutional in-service programs.

   Notices should routinely be sent to all adjunct faculty members informing them of in-service training programs being conducted by the institution and inviting them to attend and participate. Most such programs would be of great benefit to adjunct faculty and many would welcome the opportunity to be involved. This is a very worthwhile aspect of adjunct faculty development which is being ignored by most institutions.

4. Adjunct faculty members should be invited to attend faculty meetings.

   An excellent way in which to involve adjunct faculty members in the instructional process to a greater extent is to invite them to participate in faculty meetings. Allowing them to view how and why instructional decisions are made and providing them opportunities to meet with full-time faculty members would be of considerable advantage.

5. A monthly bulletin for adjunct faculty members should be printed and distributed.

A major concern of adjunct instructors is that they do not feel that they are a part of the institutional family and are generally unaware of the events which occur on campus. Providing them with a monthly bulletin containing items of interest and concern would help alleviate this concern. Instituting the bulletin would constitute a relatively small investment of money, time, or effort and should reap the substantial benefits of having a more knowledgeable instructional staff.

Other elements would require considerable time and effort for proper planning and implementation. They would necessitate the reallocation of resources and personnel. Such elements would include:

6. There should be a complete assessment of the training needs of adjunct faculty members and an evaluation of their performance and effectiveness.

Before a comprehensive training program for adjunct faculty is developed, a thorough needs assessment should be conducted. A substantial research and review of all pertinent literature should be followed by the development, administration, and analysis of opinionnaires constructed to determine the needs, attitudes, and perceptions of adjunct faculty, full-time faculty, students, and supervisors. Upon determination of the training needs of adjunct faculty members, appropriate programs and elements can be developed and established. Equally as important is the necessity for a valid and reliable

evaluation of the effectiveness of the instruction presented by adjunct faculty members. Such evaluation should be utilized for the improvement of instruction and should be conducted for the primary benefit of the instructor. Upon completion of the evaluation process, supervisors should meet with the adjunct instructors to discuss strengths, weaknesses, and training needs.

7. A general orientation program, involving all adjunct faculty members, should be developed.

A general orientation program for adjunct faculty members should be presented each quarter. The program should include a brief, two-to-three hour session on a single evening, and be designed to familiarize the adjunct instructors with the college's policies, procedures, and support services. An opportunity should also be provided for adjunct faculty members to meet with supervisors and full-time faculty members. In addition, the program should incorporate sessions involving instruction on teaching techniques and methodology. The institution's faculty and staff could provide training on such topics as: adult learning strategies, the needs of minority students, and individualized instruction.

Given the fact that most adjunct instructors are primarily employed elsewhere, attendance and participation in these sessions should be strongly encouraged, but not made mandatory. A stipend or some other form of remuneration should be awarded each participant.

8. An on-going, in-service training program for adjunct faculty members should be instituted.

While the orientation program should improve the general knowledge of adjunct instructors, most could also benefit from a more extensive training program. It would be difficult to involve adjunct instructors in weekly or monthly meetings, but a series of in-service sessions conducted on a quarterly basis would be worthwhile; as would be the development of self-instructional materials. Most adjunct faculty members are highly motivated and would probably welcome opportunities to increase their competency as instructors. Outside consultants, as well as institutional personnel, could be utilized to conduct intensive instructional sessions on topic areas of interest and need. Forums could be conducted on teaching strategies, methods, and techniques (adult learning characteristics and instructional methodology); student motivation, involvement, and participation; planning and organization of instruction (preparation of lesson plans and the use of educational and community resources); writing instructional objectives and course outlines; use of instructional and audio-visual devices; and evaluation of students and instruction.

9. An Adjunct Faculty Handbook should be developed, printed, and distributed to all adjunct faculty members.

A handbook should be prepared and distributed to all adjunct faculty members. The handbook, which might incorporate the policies, regulations, and procedures of the institution, as

well as general information concerning support services and available assistance, should be evaluated each term and revised as necessary.

Summary Statements

The orientation and in-service training of adjunct faculty members is one of the most neglected aspects of an institution's faculty development program. Few institutions provide any consideration at all and, of those which do, most conduct little more than brief orientation sessions at the beginning of an academic term. There can be little doubt that this lack of concern and effort constitutes an educationally unhealthy situation.

The program briefly described above marks an attempt to diminish some of the concerns which arise from the contracting of adjunct instructors by making each a more knowledgeable and aware member of the institution's instructional staff. It is realized that what has been discussed represents neither a utopian situation nor a panacea for all problems. It is, however, an attempt to reach a level of parity between adjunct instructors and full-time faculty members, and to provide improved instruction to a considerable portion of an institution's student population.

Several of the elements could be initiated immediately with relatively little effort or expenditure of resources, as could the planning for the other aspects of the staff development program. Some form of remuneration for the adjunct faculty members who participate should be provided and would appear to be essential for the program to be of maximum effectiveness. Few colleges budget for such a provision, but adequate expenditures must be allotted if viable in-service training is to be

provided. As funds become less available, more attention should be directed toward external (federal or foundation) sources.

In order for any educational institution to carry out its mission and provide meaningful educational opportunities to its citizens - a mission which demands that all citizens be involved and that all communities be included - considerable numbers of adjunct faculty members must be contracted. It is the institution's responsibility to insure that those faculty members be fully qualified to present the instructional programs needed and to provide adjunct instructors with opportunities for professional growth and development.

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